

The Holy Spirit is grieved when ministers of the Gospel and other Christian workers more earnestly desire the gifts than Himself; when they are more eager to be clothed with His power than to be filled with His presence; when they prefer popularity to purity; when they rely more on polished rhetoric than on the power of the Holy Ghost; when they are more concerned about preparing the sermon than themselves; when they are more ambitious to please the church than the Head of the Church; when they subordinate the ministry of the Lord Jesus to themselves and not to the Lord Jesus; when they use the sacred office as a ladder to personal fame or gain instead of a stairway up which they may lead repentant sinners to the bosom of God.

Daniel Steele

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Prayer Study # 284

DID THE BAPTISM OF THE HOLY SPIRIT END AT THE END OF THE NEW TESTAMENT PERIOD AT THE DEATH OF ALL THE NEW TESTAMENT APOSTLES?

For the promise is unto you, and to your children, and to all that are afar off, even as many as the Lord, our God, shall call.

Acts 3:39

I find no scripture that supports the viewpoint that the Baptism of the Holy Spirit is an experience that ceased with the close of the New Testament period and with the death of the original Biblical apostles. Some wrongly teach that the love chapter, 1st Corinthians 13:8-10, addressed this issue: *Love never fails. But whether there are prophecies, they will fail; whether there are tongues, they will cease; whether there is knowledge, it will vanish away. For we know in part and we prophesy in part. But when that which is perfect has come, then that which is in part will be done away.* The problem with this viewpoint is that knowledge has not vanished away-in fact, Daniel prophesied that knowledge shall increase at the time of the end (Daniel 12:4-*But thou, O Daniel, shut up the words and seal the book, even to the time of the end; many shall run to and fro, and knowledge shall be increased.*)-nor has the perfect come. The perfect, i.e. the Second Coming of Jesus, our face to face knowledge of Him, and the Kingdom Age, have not happened yet. And this could not refer to His first coming since Paul was writing these words after the first coming.

Most of these same believers also believe that there are no apostles in the Church except those who were alive in Biblical times. They believe there is no need for apostles and that there is no need for the filling of the Holy Spirit since the Church has now been established. This is troubling when we

read of the Five Fold Ministry in Ephesians 4:11-16: *And He gave some, apostles; and some, prophets; and some, evangelists; and some, pastors and teachers; for the perfecting of the saints for the work of the ministry for the edifying of the body of Christ, till we all come in the unity of the faith and of the knowledge of the Son of God, unto a perfect man, unto the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ; that we henceforth be no more children, tossed to and fro, and carried about with every wind of doctrine, by the sleight of men and cunning craftiness, by which they lie in wait to deceive; but speaking the truth in love, may grow up into Him in all things, which is the head, even Christ; from whom the whole body fitly joined together and compacted by that which every joint supplieth, according to the effectual working in the measure of the body unto the edifying of itself in love.* The purposes of these office gifts were:

1. For the perfecting or equipping of the saints
2. For the work of the ministry
3. For the edifying or building up of the Body of Christ
4. So that, we, as the Body of Christ, come into unity and knowledge of Jesus
5. To be a perfect or complete or mature person.

Obviously, the Church is not yet equipped in such a way that it ultimately brings and walks in maturity and in unity and in complete knowledge of Jesus. We have a long way to go to be that mature man, that *glorious Church not having spot or wrinkle or any such thing but... holy and without blemish* (Ephesians 5:27). I believe we cannot achieve this without that *dunamis* power of the Holy Spirit operating in us. That power comes with the Baptism in the Spirit.

I doubt there has been a day in the history of the world when there is so much evil, and the Church is so weak. Why would Jesus take away the promise of the Father when He knew we would face such a critical time where men call evil, good, and good, evil (Isaiah 5:20)?

Also, there has not been a complete fulfillment of Joel 2. Of course, there was a partial fulfillment of this prophetic word on the day of Pentecost when the Holy Spirit was poured out on the disciples. Joel 2:28-31 reads, *And it shall come to pass afterward, that I will pour out my Spirit upon all flesh: and your sons and your daughters shall prophesy, your old men shall dream dreams, your young men shall see visions; and also, upon the servants and upon the handmaids in those days will I pour out My spirit. And I will show wonders in the heavens and in the earth: blood and fire and pillars of smoke. The sun shall be turned into darkness, and the moon into blood, before the great and the terrible day of the LORD come.* I believe we will

see a full fulfillment of this prophecy. Leonard Ravenhill is reported to have called this coming day, a day that will *out-Pentecost, Pentecost*.

Why do we need the filling of the Holy Spirit today?

1. **To have the power to be a witness:** Acts 1:8-*But ye shall receive power, after the Holy Spirit is come upon you; and ye shall be witnesses unto me both in Jerusalem, and in all Judea, and in Samaria, and unto the uttermost part of the earth.*
2. **To have the power to do the greater works Jesus speaks of:** John 14:12- *Verily, verily I say unto you, he that believeth on Me, the works that I do shall he do also; and greater works that these shall he do, because I go unto My Father.*
3. **To have power to stand as genuine lovers of God in a wicked world:** 2nd Timothy 3:1-5-*This know also that in the last days perilous times will come. For men will be lovers of their own selves, covetous, boasters, proud, blasphemers, disobedient to parents, unthankful, unholy, without natural affection, trucebreakers, false accusers, incontinent, fierce, despisers of those that are good, traitors, heady, high-minded, lovers of pleasures more than lovers of God, having a form of godliness but denying the power of it; from such turn away.*

Furthermore, there is ample evidence that the gifts and the ministry of the Holy Spirit have continued from the first pouring out of the Spirit at Pentecost to the present day. Because of time I can give only a few examples, but there are numerous men and women who operated in the gifts from the time of the ending of the New Testament writings until today. In AD 150, Justyn Martyr wrote of Jews still leaving their communities in order to become Christians and receiving spiritual gifts in their new faith. Irenaeus, Bishop of Lyons, around AD 180, spoke of words of knowledge, prophecy, and healing gifts. Novatian, a prominent Christian Elder in Rome, around AD 250 told of people who were prophets, people who spoke in tongues, and people who discerned spirits. Tertullian (AD 200), Origen (AD 230), Phioxenus (AD 510) affirm the use of spiritual gifts in their services. John Knox (1514-1572), a Scottish leader of the Reformation, had the gift of prophecy, as did Samuel Rutherford (1660-1661) and Charles Spurgeon(1834-1892). Other famous Christians who have testified of this experience include Jeanne Guyon, George Fox, John Bunyan, John Wesley, George Whitefield, Charles G. Finney, George Muller, A.J. Gordon, D. L. Moody, and William and Catherine Booth, just to name a few. Surely the filling of the Holy Spirit is desperately needed in the lives of all believers in the day we live.